

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIBREV 00490 131247Z

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 XMB-02 AID-05 OPIC-03

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

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R 131225Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7519

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTIO, PFOR, GB, US

SUBJ: BONGO SEEKS US FIRMS

REF: LIBREVILLE 0395

1. IN COURSE OF MEETING MARCH 13, PRESIDENT BONGO URGED ME TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MY FORTHCOMING CONSULTATIONS IN US TO ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE AMERICAN FIRMS TO COME TO GABON.
2. PRESIDENT REAFFIRMED HIS STRONG INTEREST IN ATTRACTING AMERICAN CAPITAL AND TECHNOLOGY TO AID IN GABONESE DEVELOPMENT, AND TO HELP IN HIS EFFORTS TO DIVERSIFY ECONOMY AWAY FROM EXCLUSIVE FRENCH CONTROL. PRESIDENT PROMISED THAT AMERICAN FIRMS WILL BE GIVEN FULL CONSIDERATION IN ALL BIDDING PROCESSES FOR MAJOR PROJECTS, AND EXPRESSED STRONG ADMIRATION FOR AMERICAN METHODS AND MATERIALS.
3. WHEN I MENTIONED TO PRESIDENT CONCERN CAUSED IN US BUSINESS CIRCLES BY TWO RECENT CONTRACT AWARDS WHICH LEFT AMERICAN FIRMS OUT IN COLD (ENGINEERING CONTRACT FOR THIRD LEG OF TRANSGABON RAILROAD AND SHORT QUALIFYING PERIOD FOR BIDDERS ON NEW LIBREVILLEAIRPORT), HE ASSURED ME ONCE AGAIN THAT THERE WAS NO INTENTION TO

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PAGE 02 LIBREV 00490 131247Z

DISCRIMINATE AGAINST AMERICAN FIRMS. HE SEEMED UNAWARE

THAT TRANSGABON ENGINEERING CONTRACT HAD BEEN AWARED TO
GERMAN FIRM AND PROMISED RAISE QUESTION WITH
RESPONSIBLE MINISTER (RAWIRI), AND SAID FLATLY THAT AIR-
PORT CONTRACT HAD BEEN HELD UP BY HIS ORDER AND THAT
AMERICAN FIRMS COULD STILL BID. ON LATTER, HOWEVER, HE
ADDED THAT "ENGLISH FIRM" WAS CURRENT FRONT RUNNER BECAUSE
OF 20-YEAR CREDIT TERMS IT HAD PROPOSED, SO THAT ANY
AMERICAN COMPETITOR WOULD HAVE TO INCLUDE GOOD FINANCING
TERMS IN ITS OFFER.

COMMENT: EMBASSY UNAWARE OF ANY ENGLISH FIRM THAT HAS PRE-
QUALIFIED FOR AIRPORT CONTRACT (REFTEL).STEIGMAN

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